

Ibn Sina

He turned his attention to Medicine at the age of 17 years and was greatly troubled by metaphysical problems and in particular the works of Aristotle. By chance, he obtained a manual on this subject by the celebrated philosopher al-Farabi which solved his difficulties.

"I prefer a short life with width to a narrow one with length."

By the age of 18 he had built up a reputation as a physician and was summoned to attend the Samani ruler Nuh ibn Mansur, who, in gratitude for Ibn Sina's services, allowed him to make free use of the royal library, which contained many rare and even unique books. He devoured the contents of the library and at the age of 21 composed his first book. At about the same time he lost his father and soon afterwards left Bukhara and wandered westwards. He entered the services of Ali ibn Ma'mun, the ruler of Khiva, for a while, but ultimately fled to avoid being kidnapped by the Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. After many wanderings he came to Jurjan, near the Caspian Sea, attracted by the fame of its ruler, Qabus, as a patron of learning. Unfortunately Ibn Sina's arrival almost coincided with the deposition and murder of this ruler. At Jurjan, Ibn Sina lectured on logic and astronomy and wrote the first part of the Qanun (The Cannon of Medicine), his greatest work.

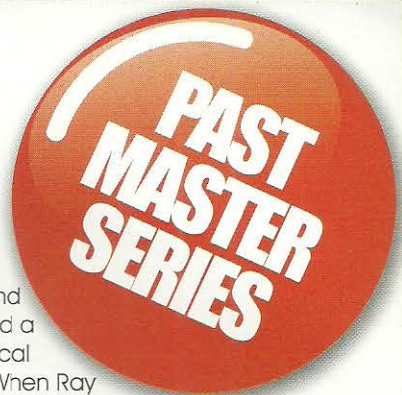
He then moved to Ray, near modern Teheran and established a busy medical practice.

When Ray was besieged, Ibn Sina fled to Hamadan where he cured Amir Shamsud-Dawala of colic and was made Prime Minister. A mutiny of soldiers against him caused his dismissal and imprisonment, but subsequently the Amir, being again attacked by the colic, reinstated him! His life at this time was very strenuous: during the day he was busy with the Amir's services, while a great deal of the night was passed in lecturing and dictating notes for his books. Students would gather in his home and read parts of his two great books, the completed Shifa and the Qanun.

Following the death of the Amir, Ibn Sina fled to Isfahan after a few brushes with the law, including a period in prison. He spent his final years in the services of the ruler of the city, Ala al-Daula whom he advised on scientific and literary matters and accompanied on military campaigns.

Friends advised him to slow down and take life in moderation, but this was not in character. "I prefer a short life with width to a narrow one with length", he would reply. Worn out by hard work and hard living, Ibn Sina died in 1036/7 at 58 years of age. He was buried in Hamadan.

(Adapted from www.ummah.net)



Abu Ali al-Husain ibn Abdullah ibn Sina (980-1037 C.E.) was born in the village of Afshana near Bukhara which today is located in the far south of Russia. His father, Abdullah, an adherent of the Ismaili sect, was from Balkh and his mother from a village near Bukhara. He displayed exceptional intellectual prowess as a child and at the age of ten was already proficient in the Qur'an and the Arabic classics. During the next six years he devoted himself to Muslim Jurisprudence, Philosophy and Natural Science and studied Logic, Euclid, and the Almagest.